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Scholars (Wrap-up)

HEAVY TASK AWAITS ULAMAS IN BRINGING BACK GLORY DAYS

By Jamaluddin Muhammad

PUTRAJAYA, July 10 (Bernama) -- Standing against a backdrop of declining Islamic civilisation which reached its low level, Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad today pointed out the heavy task awaiting ulamas to help bring back the glory days of Islam.

Sticking to the correct interpretation of Islam seemed to be the remedy suggested by the Prime Minister to the ulamas when he opened the inaugural World Conference of Islamic Scholars here.

His speech centred on ways to bring back the great Muslim civilisation so that Muslims worldwide would no longer be humiliated for being weak to the extent that they were incapable to stand up for their own rights and defending themselves.

He dwelt at length on how at one time before no one dared to oppress the Muslims or to invade their territories when Muslims were respected and regarded as a world power.

In the past, the successes of the Muslims in the administration, education, trade and industry gained for Muslims the respect and awe in the world.

He stressed that the sad fate of the Muslims resulted from their not practising the true teachings of Islam and practised what was wrongly interpreted.

The three-day conference themed "Islam in the Era of Globalisation" is being attended by some 900 scholars and academicians from 33 countries. It aims among others to bring forth resourceful ideas so that the ummah could be the driver and catalyst of their own success.

During a dialogue session later, Dr Mahathir, among others, highlighted on the need for Muslims to learn not only the "fardhu ain" or personal obligation but also the "fardhu kifayah" or collective obligations of the Muslims for the betterment of their lives.

By acquiring science and technology along with religious studies, they would be able to invent things for their own benefit and defended themselves.

Dr Mahathir also touched on the need for Muslims to understand Islam first before engaging in dialogue of civilisation with others.

The Prime Minister was also willing to share Malaysia's formula in becoming a progressive Islamic state as requested by a participant.

Two working papers were presented today.

The Director of the United States-based Institute for the Study of Islam in the Contemporary World Dr Fathi Osman presented his paper entitled "The Direction of the Muslim Ummah After September 11, 2001 and Occupation of Iraq".

Among others, he told the participants that constructive engagement in the universal village was necessary for survival because isolation may allow victimisation.

Al-Imam Al-Albaniy Centre Manager Saleem Eid Mohamad Al-Hilali from Amman, Jordan when presenting his paper on Contemporary Muslim Society and Civilization Challenge said:

"Islam should be cleared from all kinds of jahiliyah philosophy apart from separating modern civilisation from negative theories and influences by the European."

-- BERNAMA

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